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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM
IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

MASS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN
LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Letter dated 6 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a letter addressed to you by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, containing a request for the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Mass violations of human rights and freedoms in Latvia and Estonia" as an important and urgent question.

I would ask you to consider the aforementioned letter from the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, as the explanatory memorandum required under rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

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ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

Letter dated 5 November 1992 from the President of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to inform you about the relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Estonia, as well as of our concern over the state of those relations.

As you know, the Russian Federation played a determinant role in the achievement of independence by the Baltic States. We are resolved to continue to develop relations of genuine good-neighbourliness, cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual trust with those States.

The Russian leadership, respecting the principles of international law and the expressed will of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, clearly and unequivocally reiterates its intention to withdraw its troops from the territories of those States.

From the very outset of the negotiations on this question, we repeatedly stated our position of principle that the troops could be withdrawn within a short period of time provided that agreement was reached on a number of issues intrinsically linked to this question, in the first place the issues of ensuring the normal functioning of the troops during the withdrawal period, and guaranteeing the social and legal protection and individual rights of military personnel and military pensioners and members of their families.

Unfortunately, we must state that as of now these vital issues have not been resolved. This seriously complicates the situation of the Russian military personnel and their families, and generates an extremely negative attitude among the Russian public. In the circumstances we were compelled to suspend temporarily the withdrawal of troops from the territory of the Baltic States. The withdrawal will be resumed and completed within a short and realistically feasible time-frame after the signing of the State agreements between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Estonia on the whole range of issues relating to the withdrawal of the troops. There must be no doubt as to our resolve to sign such agreements as soon as possible.

At the same time, the further development of relations between Russia and the Baltic States will depend largely on the situation of the Russian-speaking population in those States. Such an approach, I believe, is justified and understandable.

Today, the discriminatory policies and practices of the authorities of Latvia and Estonia with respect to this population group, which are in certain instances even embodied in the legal systems of those countries, run contrary to the fundamental principles of the United Nations and violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Employment Policy Convention, the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation and the Declaration on Social Progress and Development. This situation, we believe, should be a matter for consideration by the United Nations. The existence in Europe of conditions which permit flagrant discrimination against a considerable part of the population of States and the emergence of new hotbeds of tension and conflict situations is inadmissible.

I would ask you, Sir, to take all measures within the United Nations, the Security Council and the General Assembly to induce the Baltic States to discharge fully and in good faith the commitments they have undertaken under bilateral and international agreements in the area of human rights and freedoms.

I propose that the question of mass violations of human rights and freedoms in those States should be included in the agenda of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly as an important and urgent matter.

(Signed) Boris YELTSIN

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